

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04

SIL-01 IO-13 MCT-01 USSS-00 SY-05 HEW-04 TRSE-00

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P R 262116Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3431

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

"3./AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH

AMCONSUL CALI POUCH

AOMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

USSOUTHCOM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ELAB, SNAR, CO

SUBJ: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. THE THREAT OF A GENERAL STRIKE AND OTHER LABOR UNREST WERE OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO THE GOC. THE CONGRESS IS TO VOTE ON A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY TO ALTER ELECTION PROCEDURES AND REFORM THE JUDICIARY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. VISITORS INCLUDED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS GEORGE DALLEY AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY FELIPE GONZALEZ. THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL BE IN THE U.S. FOR CONSULTATIONS ON NARCOTICS INTERDICTION. THE KIDNAPPING OF A FORMER GOVERNMENT MINISTER HIGHLIGHTED PUBLIC ORDER PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. LABOR UNREST DOMINATES SCENE. CONFLICTING STATEMENTS BY
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DEMOCRATIC LABOR ORGANIZATIONS LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THESE UNIONS MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN A GENERAL STRIKE WITH LEFT-WING UNIONS. BOTH THE UTC AND CTC, HOWEVER, AGREED TO A MINISTERIAL LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT, WITH A POSSIBLE PRESIDENTIAL MEETING AT A LATER DATE. ACCORDING TO UNION OFFICIALS, BOTH DEMOCRATIC GROUPS WOULD PREFER TO AVOID SETTING A FIRM STRIKE DEADLINE IN ORDER TO KEEP THEIR OPTIONS OPEN. THE

LATEST GOC OFFER FACILITATES THIS. UNION LEADERS ARE MAINTAINING A MILITANT PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO PREVENT THE LEFT-WING UNIONISTS FROM DOMINATING THE SITUATION, BUT OBVIOUSLY STILL HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A GENERAL STRIKE. MEANWHILE THE GOC HAS THREATENED TO IMPOSE SIX-MONTH JAIL SENTENCES AGAINST ANYONE PARTICIPATING IN A STRIKE "AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER." THE GOC HAD ALSO ORDERED CEMENT STRIKERS BACK TO WORK PENDING COMPULSORY ARBITRATION, BUT SUSPENDED THE ORDER WHEN NEGOTIATIONS REOPENED ON AUGUST 25. A NATIONAL TEACHERS STRIKE BEGAN AUGUST 22, BUT APPARENTLY WITH VERY LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE UNION AND THE GOVERNMENT WERE AGREED TO WHILE THE STRIKE CONTINUES. THE STATE-OWNED PETROLEUM COMPANY, ECOPETROL, WAS STRUCK AUGUST 25, WITH THE UNION CLAIMING THAT THE COMPANY HAD NOT FULLY IMPLEMENTED THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT SIGNED EARLIER THIS YEAR. COMPANY OFFICIALS REPORT REFINERY OPERATIONS CONTINUE, WITH THE INSTALLATIONS UNDER MILITARY CONTROL. ALL OF THESE STRIKES INVOLVE LEFT WING UNIONS. THE VAGUENESS OF THE ISSUES HAS LED TO SPECULATION THAT THE DISPUTES ARE PRIMARILY POLITICAL IN NATURE.

3. AGREEMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY. A BIPARTISAN SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE'S CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE HAS AGREED ON REVISIONS TO THE LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY. UNDER THESE REVISIONS, WHICH MUST NOW BE PASSED BY BOTH LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS, THE ASSEMBLY WILL MEET FOR A ONE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 15, 1978; DELEGATES TO THE ASSEMBLY WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE ELECTED ON THE SAME DATE AS THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (JUNE 4); DELEGATES CANNOT BE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS; CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD FEBRUARY 26; AND ALL FUTURE CHANGES OF ELECTION LAWS WILL REQUIRE A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF CONGRESS/ THE BIPARTISAN NATURE OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE MAY ENSURE QUICK PASSAGE OF THE LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD AUTHORIZE THE ASSEMBLY TO REVISE THE PRESENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENTS AND MUNICIPALITIES. SENATORS FROM THE OSPINS-PASTRANA CONSERVATIVE PARTY FACTION, HOWEVER, REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN THE DELIBERATIONS. THEY CRITICIZED THE PROPOSAL AND THE ALVARISTA CONSERVATIVES WHO SUPPORTED THE CHANGES, CHARGING THAT THE ALVARISTAS VIOLATED CONSERVATIVE PARTY STATUTES* PUT PERSONALISM BEFORE PARTY LOYALTY, AND DAMAGED THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION HOPES.

4. DALLEY CONSULTS ON ILO MATTERS. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS GEORGE DALLEY HELD PRE-32ND UNGA CONSULTATIONS WITH EMBOFFS AND FONOFF OFFICIALS ON AUGUST 22. MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED INCLUDED THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, HUMAN RIGHTS, THE U.N. SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT AND THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY, THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, KOREA, CHINA, AND THE COMPOSITION OF VARIOUS U.N. COMMITTEES (SEE BOGOTA 8008).

5. SPANISH OPPOSITION LEADER WARMLY RECEIVED. SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY FELIPE GONZALEZ ARRIVED AUGUST 24 AMIDST CONSIDERABLE, FAVORABLE PUBLICITY. GONZALEZ ADDRESSED THE CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES THE SAME DAY AND MET WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AUGUST 25 BEFORE LEAVING FOR CARTAGENA IN CONTINUATION OF HIS SOUGH AMERICAN TOUR. SEPARATE REPORT FOLLOWS.

6. MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL PARTICIPATE IN U.S. DRUG PROGRAM. MINISTER OF JUSTICE CESAR GOMEZ AND PROCURATOR (ATTORNEY) GENERAL JAIME SERRANO DEPART FOR THE U.S. ON AUGUST 28 TO PARTICIPATE IN A DEA EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM. THEY WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL MIGUEL SANCHEZ, WHO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS THE GOC'S LEGAL ATTACHE FOR DRUG AFFAIRS IN THE U.S. COMMENT: THIS LATEST EXCHANGE MARKS A CONTINUATION OF THE GOC'S HIGH-LEVEL OF INTEREST IN NARCOTICS INTERDICTION WHICH GAINED IMPETUS FROM MRS. CARTER'S JUNE VISIT HERE AND OTHER HIGH-LEVEL U.S. OFFICIAL CALLERS.

7. FORMER MINISTER KIDNAPPED. HUGO FERREIRA, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE FROM 1958-1962, AND PRESENTLY AN INDUSTRIAL EXECUTIVE, WAS KIDNAPPED FROM HIS OFFICE NEAR THE U.S. EMBASSY ON AUGUST 19, APPARENTLY BY THE LEFTIST M-19 TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. FERREIRA'S COMPANY HAS AGREED TO SETTLE A LONG-STANDING LABOR DISPUTE AS DEMANDED BY THE TERRORISTS. IN AN UNRELATED INCIDENT, THREE PERSONS WERE REPORTED KILLED AND FORTY-FIVE WOUNDED IN AN AUGUST 21 ATTACK ON A POLICE STATION IN CAICEDO, ANTIOQUIA. AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT YET IDENTIFIED THE ASSAILANTS. DREXLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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